REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 12, 2004

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Dunn, Parnell,

Petitpas

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Odle, Terry Marpert, Terry Shirk, Lori Peckol, Erika

Vandenbrande, Redmond Planning Department; Jim

Charlier, Consultant

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers. Commissioners Allen and McCarthy were excused.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was agreed that approval of the minor amendments to the Community Development Guide should be moved ahead of the neighborhood plan discussion, and that a brief discussion should be added at the end of the meeting regarding the reopening of issues. The agenda as amended was approved by acclamation.

APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

A. May 5, 2004

The minutes as submitted were approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

STUDY SESSION

2003-2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

- Minor Amendments to the Redmond Community Development Guide

Principal Planner Terry Marpert noted that the Commission heard testimony on the six minor amendments on February 25, and on March 10 reached a conclusion on five of the six issues. The remaining matter is the TMP requirements.

Chair Snodgrass asked for a synopsis of the meeting with the stakeholders. Erika Vandenbrande said two meetings with the stakeholders interested in transportation demand management were held. At the first meeting the focus was on the language changes. At the second meeting there was a compelling case made for pulling the proposed parking requirements changes out of the package and having the issue dealt with in the context of the Transportation Master Plan and

Comprehensive Plan update. Concurrence on the language revisions has been reached by all parties.

Chair Snodgrass said staff did an excellent job of crafting proposals based on the input generated at the stakeholders meetings. Overall the process worked very well.

Motion to adopt the TMP element of the minor amendments to the Redmond Community Development Guide was made by Commissioner Dunn. Second was by Commissioner Parnell and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adopt the minor amendments to the Redmond Community Development Guide, incorporating the changes to the TMP plan, and approve the transmittal memo and forward the package to the City Council was made by Commissioner Petitpas. Second was by Commissioner Dunn and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION

Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing open and explained the ground rules.

Mark Webster, address not given, said his home borders the Verizon property. He voiced concern about the proposal to include Neighborhood Commercial in the Grass Lawn neighborhood; he said his understanding is that the Verizon property would be the most likely location for such a use. For the past 21 years the property has served as a greenbelt; the area is used by wildlife. Construction of homes on the property would be a better use than a commercial establishment. Traffic would not be improved by having a commercial use, nor would the neighborhood be improved in any way.

Ms. Holly Plackett, 7524 137th Avenue NE, reading from a letter submitted to the Planning Commission, said she has been a resident of the Grass Lawn community for 20 years. She recognized the hard work done by the CAC that finalized the plan under consideration. She encouraged the Commission to approve the plan as drafted. The CAC worked diligently through all of the issues in its attempt to craft a quality plan that will strengthen the neighborhood. Following adoption of the neighborhood plan, effort will be put into developing a neighborhood association which will seek to keep the neighborhood on track with the proposed plan and offer a place for residents to discuss ways to make the neighborhood even better by focusing on quality of life, parks and open space, public safety, and other issues of importance. The Commission should encourage the City Council to continue staff support for the other seven neighborhood plans that are yet to be completed. When all of the neighborhood plans are completed, and more neighborhood associations are formalized, there could be a formal neighborhood association meeting annually, a town hall-type meeting at which ideas common to all neighborhoods can be discussed. Strong neighborhoods build strong communities, which build strong counties, which build strong states, which build strong countries and strong worldwide communities. The Grass Lawn plan does an excellent job of addressing housing needs, and encourages better use of Grass Lawn Park. More needs to be done about street lighting, non-motorized connections to the park, and installing more bus shelters.

Mr. Redmond Sharp, 14005 NE 77th Street, said the process followed by the CAC did not adequately allow for effective interaction between the committee and the community. As a result, some of the findings of the committee were skewed, and in some cases merely a rubber stamping of staff proposals. With regard to the future local resource park site on N.E. 80th Street near 140th, he noted that the retention pond on the site was not properly engineered. It acts as an attractive nuisance. Building a park on the site, which is next to the busiest road in Redmond, would not be wise. A better use of the site would be as a greenbelt. When the recent utility work was done on N.E. 80th Street, the roadway cuttings were dumped on the site; nothing will grow around that mound, and suggested that the site may now be contaminated. Residents along N.E. 80th Street between 140th Avenue N.E. and Kirkland/Redmond Road complain about the traffic coming down N.E. 80th Street and turning right onto Kirkland/Redmond Road, but shutting off N.E. 80th Street is not the answer. There were no studies presented to the committee about the issues. Before the plan is approved, the Commission should seek from staff statistics regarding how many accidents have occurred at the intersection of N.E. 80th and 140th Avenue N.E. He also said the plan did not address traffic through the Greenbriar and Woodford developments.

Mr. Ron Belter, 7357 148th Avenue N.E., called attention to Policy N-GL-X-2 and questioned how the proposed non-motorized connections to Grass Lawn Park would be provided from the north as called for. He said he also could see no solid reason behind the notion of renaming Grass Lawn Park. He also questioned how the development of the area to the north of Grass Lawn Park with commercial uses would interact with the park and how it would correspond to the sustaining of natural systems and beauty within the community. The proposal looks to include affordable housing; in fact the Grass Lawn area is one of the most affordable areas of the Eastside.

Mr. Stuart Irvine, 7347 148th Avenue NE, said he received notice of the first meeting one week after it occurred. He said there is much in the proposed plan that talks about easy access walking and bicycle trails, but very little about where such facilities will be located. It is too utopian to believe that everyone within the area is a walking or bicycling fanatic, particularly to and from commercial districts. Access to the area will be from 148th Avenue NE. The two-lane road has a center median, and there is no left-turn access to get into the commercial area. For traffic southbound on 148th wanting to turn into the commercial area, cross traffic will certainly cause traffic to back up.

Ms. Melissa Irvine, 7347 148th Avenue NE, voiced concern regarding the proposed commercial district close to the park, and opined that it would be redundant to existing services on 132nd Avenue N.E. She also expressed concern with the major development of multifamily housing in an area where there are many water table issues. A major development in what is essentially a wetland area will impact wildlife and the ecosystem. The homes could end up with a lot of mold problems.

Chair Snodgrass pointed out that there is nothing in the proposed Grass Lawn plan that seeks to increase densities within the neighborhood. Policy Planning Manager Rob Odle said the Verizon property is the only site on which a major multifamily development could occur, and there have

been no proposals submitted for the property. Should an actual proposal come forward, there will be opportunity for public comment.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Parnell, Ms. Irvine said she would prefer to see a housing development over a commercial development on the Verizon property.

Mr. Steve Rondell, 7349 148th Avenue NE, registered his concerns regarding any commercial development on the Verizon property, and noted that he had already addressed the Council about purchasing the property for park expansion. The best outcome would be for the City to investigate purchasing the Verizon site for development as a park. Too much greenery and open space has already been lost. Other cities are seeking to preserve the natural state of things.

Mr. Jerzy Radka, 7353 148th Avenue NE, spoke as a certified arborist with 25 years experience in the field. He pointed out that two-thirds of the Verizon property is wetland and as such is undevelopable. It contains the only old growth fir left in the area. If those trees are removed, during the next windstorm trees all over Grass Lawn will be vulnerable. The quality of the air in Redmond is dependent on having an adequate amount of vegetation. Furthermore, the vegetation is providing shade for the salmon-bearing stream. The synthetic turf installed at the park has already reduced the number of oxygen-generating plants. The vegetation and the wetland is acting like a sponge to absorb water, removal of the vegetation or destroying the wetland will result flooding issues for the local area.

Mr. Mike Flemming, 14504 NE 66th Court, said it would be a tragedy to create a commercial zone in the middle of a residential area. The very idea is ridiculous given that there are commercial uses nearby that are easily accessible. Convenience stores located near parks is a breeding grounds for drug traffic. There is also a great deal of ground water in the area; most of the Grass Lawn Park is wetland. The park was originally constructed as a local park, but over time it has become a regional park. Now park visitors drive in in their cars and take up all of the available parking spaces at the park and on all of the surrounding streets. An underground or decked parking structure could possibly be built into the sloped hillside, or else park visitors should be required to park at the park and ride lot and shuttled to the park to keep them from parking in the neighborhoods. Another option would be to require a sticker to park in the neighborhood.

Ms. Ann Braunger, 6909 143rd Court NE, echoed concerns regarding the addition of commercial uses on the Verizon site. The area is very special and should remain that way by remaining as a green space. The site acts as an extension to the park. There are a number of shopping areas in close proximity to the residential neighborhoods. People need places they can walk to, but let them walk to existing shops.

Ms. Holly Plackett, 7524 137th Avenue NE, said the comments made by the local residents proves her point about the need for established, formal neighborhood associations. The plan should be approved. The policy regarding commercial uses is very general, and if necessary can be amended down the road.

Ms. Melissa Irvine, 7347 148th Avenue NE, voiced concern over adopting a document with the thought that down the road it can be amended. Too often plans get started that are not agreeable to a community, but down the road the necessary amendments do not get made on the thinking that the plan was approved. The neighborhood plan that gets adopted is one that should be agreed on in whole to begin with

Summarizing the comments, Chair Snodgrass noted that the plan appears to be generally suitable to the community outside the hot buttons of commercial uses, wetlands, parking, and the NE 80^{th} park and the associated traffic revisions.

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed, adding that written comments will still be accepted and oral comments can be made during Items from the Audience portion of each Commission meeting up to the time the Commission takes action on the plan.

Chair Snodgrass said the Commission is generally favorable toward Neighborhood Commercial if compatible with the local neighborhood. Having local commercial uses cuts down on trips, encourages people to get out of their cars, and creates a neighborhood feel. The Commission is very aware of the issues associated with having quick-stop convenience stores such as 7-Eleven. He said there will be no such uses in Grass Lawn, even under the plan as proposed because the requirement is for small-scale uses compatible with nearby uses with limited hours of operation.

By way of background, Senior Planner Terry Shirk commented that the Grass Lawn CAC was formed in April 2003 following a community services fair that was very well attended. Throughout the process the members carefully considered all of the issues before them in carrying out their primary mission of updating the Grass Lawn neighborhood plan. The recommendation addresses the formation of a neighborhood association; and includes policy recommendations relating to neighborhood identification signs; parks, recreation and open space; housing and community character; Neighborhood Commercial; and transportation policies. The committee completed its work in the Fall of 2003 and the draft policies were mailed to everyone in the neighborhood in early 2004. An open house was held in February 2004 to solicit comments from the community at large.

Ms. Shirk said the purpose behind the formation of a neighborhood association is to continue the work begun by the CAC. The goal is to have meetings at least annually to evaluate how the plan is being implemented, address any needed changes to the plan, and openly discuss issues facing the neighborhood. One of the first activities the CAC would like to see the neighborhood association take on is the issue of potentially renaming the neighborhood, not the park. Once a name for the neighborhood is settled on, even if it remains the same, neighborhood identification signs should be put up to give the community a better sense of place.

The CAC felt that Grass Lawn Park had evolved into more of a community space than a neighborhood gathering place and desired improvements to promote more neighborhood gathering areas. Accordingly, the committee thought it would be appropriate to allow for food concessions, install tables and benches where games could occur, and create an outdoor performance area. Also important to the CAC was the notion of improving connections, including non-motorized connections between the neighborhoods and the park, a pedestrian

overcrossing of 148th Avenue NE between NE 80th Street and Old Redmond Road, and creating a connection to the resource park at 140th Avenue NE and Redmond Way. With regard to the latter, there is a road south of the park that connects through a private development; the CAC talked about working with the Stratford Village neighborhood association to see if there would be any interest or opportunity to create connections to the park through their properties for the neighborhoods to the south.

The CAC felt strongly about ensuring there will be a variety of housing options for residents of all demographics. The committee agreed that the need for additional housing could in part be met by allowing for cottage units at a density of two-to-one, and by allowing duplex, triplex and fourplex structures designed to look like single family homes and consistent with the neighborhood character. The plan does not include any zoning changes, so the overall density of the neighborhood will not change with adoption of the plan. The CAC supported the notion of establishing inclusionary requirements in which ten percent of all new housing units would have to be affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of the King County median income. To ensure compatibility, all new housing should go through design review. Living space, not garages, should be the predominant design feature.

The CAC concluded that allowing for small-scale stores and services would benefit the neighborhood. The Grass Lawn area is predominantly residential, and there are no areas other than the park where people can gather and create a sense of place. No specific site was selected as the location for Neighborhood Commercial, but there was a focus on allowing it to the north of the park on 148th Avenue NE. Banking, coffee shops and service stores were contemplated for the commercial area, each of which would have limited hours of operation.

Ms. Shirk said one of the key components of the recommended plan is improving pedestrian safety and non-motorized connections. Some of the specific improvements envisioned are the closure of the connection from NE 80th Street at Redmond Way, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks and bus shelters.

The proposed plan includes a comprehensive strategy for addressing concerns within the neighborhood. The plan is consistent with all Comprehensive Plan policies addressing specific quality of life issues, public involvement activities, land use issues, and housing and affordability issues. The plan seeks to maintain the neighborhood character and will help to guide new development.

Ms. Shirk explained that following review of the CAC recommendations and consideration of the public testimony, the role the of the Commission will be to revise the plan as needed and make a recommendation to the City Council for final action.

Ms. Shirk noted that Policy N-GL-X-2 should read "Single Family Urban" rather than "Low Moderate-Density" housing to reflect the proposed land use policy updates.

The following items constituted the issues list developed by the Commission:

- Neighborhood Commercial on 148th Avenue NE
- Requirements for locating Neighborhood Commercial uses
- Traffic jams on 148th Avenue NE
- Proximity to other commercial uses on 132nd Avenue NE
- Wetland and environmental concerns, including loss of trees, on the Verizon property
- Parking demand created by Grass Lawn Park, and parking controls in the neighborhoods
- The overall development potential and how the neighborhood plan impacts it
- Status of any large development opportunities in the area
- N.E. 80th Street Park and Scott's Pond retention facility
- Closure/traffic revisions NE 80th Street
- Process for public involvement
- Editorial revisions
- Concessions at the park
- Affordable housing requirement concept and any density bonuses
- Clarify character and design policies, need for flexibility
- Potential conflict of policy allowing multiplex units with citywide policies regarding density
- Effect of Old Redmond Road improvements on the neighborhood plan

BREAK

STUDY SESSION

2003-2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

Transportation Element

Mr. Marpert said the draft Transportation Element represents many hours of work over the past year and input from a variety of sources. The plan remains a work in progress. A Public Hearing is slated for May 19, and additional study sessions are marked for June 9 and June 23. The Council is tentatively scheduled to review the Commission's recommended Transportation Element in July; a final decision will be made shortly thereafter.

Continuing, Mr. Marpert said the basis for the draft policies is the 2022 vision statement that was adopted by the Council in the fall of 2003. The vision statement addresses efficient energy and environmentally sound transportation systems, choices in travel modes, well connected neighborhoods and commercial areas via roads, sidewalks, paths, trails, and technology. The Transportation Element supports the vision in eight specific ways: 1) it supports the planned land uses of the City by serving the mobility, circulation and access needs of the community; 2) it envisions a concurrency system that is based on a planned transportation system offering travel choices, preserving community character and ensuring accountability; 3) it promotes well-designed pedestrian-friendly streets which in certain corridors will be designated as multimodal; 4) it sets forth public transit as a key element for meeting the transportation needs of the City into the future; 5) it allows for a well-developed pedestrian and bicycle network; 6) it envisions the

improvement of the neighborhoods through effective traffic-calming strategies; 7) it provides support for transportation demand management; and 8) it sets the stage for having Redmond be effective in helping to shape the transportation future for the region.

Chair Snodgrass thought it would be helpful for the Commission to have a matrix summarizing the policy changes in the proposed Transportation Element and how they map to the original document.

Chair Snodgrass asked if the proposed document does an adequate job of letting land use drive transportation and not the other way around. Jim Charlier, consultant with Charlier Associates, allowed that it does. He added that the document in and of itself will not drive change in the community. He said he is comfortable with the document as an expression of the direction he recommended.

With regard to concurrency, Chair Snodgrass noted that the term "plan-based approach" is used in the document but is not a defined term. Mr. Charlier said the term is continuing to evolve; in the end it may be given a definition. All of the policies should capture what is meant by the term.

Mr. Charlier observed that while the current Comprehensive Plan offers a good start for defining a goal structure. However, other than roadway levels of service, there is no reporting mechanism for how it all is working. Having an annual report card approach would help to build credibility with the public and give staff and the Council a better comfort level. Concurrency should be one of the measures included in the annual reporting process. The current Comprehensive Plan has modeshare objectives, but they are not part of the concurrency management system. Key measures within the overall performance reporting should be used as the concurrency management system, which would become a specific administrative activity within the overall umbrella of a goals structure that is monitored and reported on, and that is part of what is meant by plan-based approach. Furthermore, where the present approach is to monitor concurrency on a project-by-project basis, the result is often spot improvements that may or may not be consistent with the overall plan for the development of the City. Over time the better approach would be for development as it comes online to implement the established plan for the City as a whole. A plan-based concurrency approach includes a Comprehensive Plan that is descriptive of desired land uses, and a transportation plan with a list of necessary projects, what they will cost and when they should be built.

Mr. Charlier said that the monitoring, testing and reporting process should occur annually unless the rate of growth is too rapid to afford waiting a year for the review. Certain triggering mechanisms can be built in to help the City stay on top of growth. For roadways, the relatively simple volume-over-capacity system should continue to be used, but with a screenline rather than a district-based approach. For transit, a connectivity matrix should be developed and used, focused both on local and regional connections. Regional transit times should be competitive with drive-alone times. A distinction should be drawn between the amount of development that is supportable without high-capacity transit and the amount of development that is supportable with high-capacity transit for both urban centers in Redmond, the downtown and Overlake. That

would set in motion the right dynamic, both for Redmond and for the region. For bicycle and pedestrian modes, the focus should be on the percentage of system completion.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that the policies should clearly set forth the objectives and process of the plan-based approach without specifically stating what the measurements should be. Mr. Marpert cautioned against including policies that are focused on things outside the control of the City, such as transit service levels.

It was agreed to add to the issues list the question of whether or not the policies are defined too broadly.

Chair Snodgrass said he did not see anywhere in the document the notion of phased development based on availability of high-capacity transit. Mr. Charlier agreed and allowed that as the notion evolves it should be clearly expressed in the document. He added that additional capacity should not be considered when and if high-capacity transit comes online, rather it should be considered that the maximum density growth will not occur unless high-capacity transit comes online. The City does not want to be left off the map when the region is laying out high-capacity transit routes, and that will take having the landowners on the team that is helping to make it happen. Because the planned levels of growth may not be achievable without high-capacity transit, there should be a plan for how to proceed should it not come to Redmond. The two-tiered system would not add development capacity with high-capacity transit, but would subtract from it without high-capacity transit.

Chair Snodgrass asked if the plan-based approach moves the City away from using SEPA mitigation, and if so if that should be expressed in the policies. Mr. Marpert said the City ceased using SEPA as a major mitigation tool in the mid- to late 90s and moved to using the transportation impact fee system allowed under the Growth Management Act (GMA). SEPA is currently used in only a few situations, namely for safety and site-specific issues. It was agreed that whether or not the plan-based approach adequately addresses the appropriate use of SEPA should be added to the issues table.

Commissioner Dunn asked if the plan-based approach is intended to include quality of life and community character concepts, and whether concurrency is all-inclusive or focused just on the streets. Mr. Charlier said policies TR-9 and TR-10 were reviewed in light of that question; the conclusion reached was that Policy TR-9 should be strengthened, and to that end a revision has been made to read "Evaluate developer-funded transportation projects from the perspective of community character. Ensure that no transportation projects conflicting with and detracting from the desired character of affected neighborhoods as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan are accepted as mitigation for capacity issues or to meet transportation concurrency." The policy essentially says nothing that conflicts with the desired character can be used to meet concurrency.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Parnell, Mr. Charlier explained that the City has the right to set goals and objectives and to hold everyone to them. A level-of-service standard is one type of objective, and happens to be the one mandated by the GMA. In the case of transportation, the Comprehensive Plan should set out what the City wants to do and include

specific measures that will allow for an annual evaluation of whether or not the goals are being accomplished.

Addressing the second half of Commissioner Dunn's question, Mr. Charlier said concurrency is nothing more than an on and off switch for development based on the transportation system. The concurrency management system should include more than just streets, but not things such as horse paths and whether or not a particular trail is sufficiently green.

There was agreement that the element should specifically indicate that there is to be a concurrency management system and list the elements it contains.

Chair Snodgrass commented that Redmond is becoming an urban center because it is required to under the GMA. The City should at the very least have the ability to control the densification process if adequate outside support is not forthcoming, such as adequate transit facilities. Mr. Charlier agreed, adding that the question of whether a given level of density works with a given level of transportation is part of the planning process. Once the plan is written, the only question is how well the transportation network is meshing with the land uses.

It was moved and seconded to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Dunn, Mr. Charlier allowed that the plan-based approach always is predicated on a funded transportation plan. The question of how much funding for each year of the plan will be available for transportation projects, however, has not black and white answer; the Council makes that decision on an annual basis.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that the is sues list should include the notion of the fair share concept. Mr. Charlier said once the Transportation Element is adopted, one of the tasks for 2005 should be a revamping of the impact fee and transportation funding system.

Commissioner Dunn asked if there should be any typology designations in the plan associated with transit. Mr. Charlier said the only reason he was proposing typologies in certain categories is that they move the focus closer to what is to be accomplished. Typologies should not be considered an end in and of themselves. Commissioner Dunn said making transit effective will involve making sure the nodes are effective, along with the amenities associated with them. Just like the plan lays out what is meant by pedestrian friendly environments, there should be some qualitative characteristics of the transit system that should be identified in the plan in addition to level of service frequencies. Mr. Charlier said transit access is often talked about as being one of the things that is broken about the system. One possible way to fix it would be to establish typologies. However, in talking with Redmond residents, the issue simply did not come up very often. Many of the bus stops in the City are marginal, but the focus of the residents has been on a lack of connections within the local system, and traveling regionally is not a good choice because of travel times. It was those most urgent issues that were incorporated into the draft plan. The design standards established by the regional transit agency could be incorporated into the element.

The matter was placed on the issues list for additional discussion.

Commissioner Dunn asked if concurrency system measures access, circulation and mobility or just mobility. Mr. Charlier allowed that it measures all three and agreed that the use of those ideas could be more explicit in the definition of concurrency.

DISCUSSION

Reopening Issues

It was agreed to reschedule the issue to the next Commission meeting.

REPORTS

Principal Planner Lori Peckol said the Council has directed the Commission to have a full discussion of the manufacturing issue. She proposed holding a joint meeting with the Planning Commission and the City Council, with the Chamber of Commerce and the public invited. The focus would be on current and future trends in manufacturing, and what types of manufacturing businesses might be attracted to Redmond in the future given the characteristics and amenities of the City. She said the target date is the second week of June, possibly in the late afternoon.

The Commission agreed that the joint meeting approach would be a good idea.

Ms. Peckol reported that the Council has yet to make a final decision on the Bear Creek issue.

SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

ADJOURN

Minutes Approved On:

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 10:19 p.m.

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Recording Secretary